

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 03299 130459Z
ACTION EUR-12

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R 130442Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7371
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 03299

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GE, UK
SUBJECT: FCO UNDER SECRETARY VISITS EAST BERLIN

1. REGINALD ALFRED HIBBERT, UNDER SECRETARY AT
THE FCO, VISITED EAST BERLIN FOR CONSULTATIONS
MAY 3 TO 5. HIBBERT'S VISIT WAS IN RETURN FOR
ONE MADE BY DEPUTY MINISTER MFA KURT NIER TO LONDON
IN 1977. IN ADDITION TO MEETING WITH NIER, HIBBERT
ALSO MET DEPONMIN WILERDING AND WITH FONMIN FISCHER.
ACCORDING TO UK EMBASSY SOURCES, THE GDR SIDE
INDICATED AN INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH
THE UK AND EXPLAINED THEIR VIEWS ON
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 03299 130459Z

QUESTIONS RELATING TO DETENTE. THE EAST GERMANS
TOLD HIBBERT IT WOULD BE TO THE UK'S
ADVANTAGE TO DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH THE GDR, MAKING
IT CLEAR THAT THE UK COULD NOT TAKE THE GDR FOR
GRANTED. THE EAST GERMANS SEEMED TO BE SAYING
THAT THE UK COULD NOT DEVELOP GOOD RELATIONS WITH
THE USSR AND ASSUME THAT RELATIONS WITH THE GDR

WOULD AUTOMATICALLY IMPROVE AS WELL. DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL MATTERS TOOK ONLY ONE-HALF HOUR, ACCORDING TO ONE UK EMBASSY SOURCE, AND WAS VERY GENERAL IN CONTENT.

2. HIBBERT, WE ARE TOLD, DID MOST OF THE TALKING ON MULTILATERAL MATTERS, TALKING ABOUT THE BELGRADE CSCE MEETING, AFRICA, DISARMAMENT, AND THE MIDDLE EAST. NIER REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT BELGRADE HAD NOT GONE MORE CONSTRUCTIVELY AND DID NOT RESPOND IN MORE THAN GENERALITIES TO HIBBERT'S CALL FOR MODERATION ON RHODESIAN, NAMIBIA AND SOUTH AFRICA ISSUES. THE MIDDLE EAST AND DISARMAMENT MATTERS WERE APPARENTLY NOT DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH; AND THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF EC/CEMA RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH HIBBERT HAD INTENDED TO RAISE THIS TOPIC.

3. THE EAST GERMANS DID SOUND THE UK ABOUT A RETURN VISIT BY NIER TO LONDON NEXT YEAR. THE GDR SEEMED TO WISH TO PUT ON A REGULAR ANNUAL BASIS "POLITICAL" CONSULTATIONS AT THE UNDER SECRETARY LEVEL. THE UK MADE NO COMMITMENT, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE UK NEXT YEAR.

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PAGE 03 BERLIN 03299 130459Z

4. THE GDR PRESS CARRIED A BRIEF BUT PROMINENT REPORT ON THE MEETING BETWEEN FISCHER AND HIBBERT, GIVING A GENERALIZED ACCOUNT OF THE TALKS. THE NEWSPAPER REPORT EMPHASIZES DISCUSSION OF DISARMAMENT ISSUES AND QUOTED FISCHER AS STRESSING THAT GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GDR AND THE UK IN ALL AREAS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR THE CLIMATE IN EUROPE. HIBBERT IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE UK IS INTERESTED IN THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS TOWARD THE GDR. THE TALKS WERE HELD IN AN "OBJECTIVE" ATMOSPHERE. BOLEN

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